



Eagle, 1946

ex-SNS *Horst Wessel*; WIX-327

Horst Wessel (1907-1930) was a Nazi party member, SA Stormtrooper and purported pimp who was killed fighting German Communists in 1930. Some months before he died, Wessel had written the verses to what would become the "Horst Wessel Lied" but it first gained popular currency when a choir of Stormtroopers performed it at his funeral. It was later recorded, and in 1931 it became the official anthem of the Nazi Party, played alongside *Deutschland über Alles* at all official occasions.

Eagle: Any of various large diurnal birds of prey of the family Accipitridae, including members of the genera *Aquila* and *Haliaeetus*, characterized by a powerful hooked bill, keen vision, long broad wings, and strong soaring flight.

Builder: Blohm & Voss Shipyards, Hamburg, Germany

Commissioned: 1936 (German Navy); 15 May 1946 (U.S. Coast Guard)

Length: 295'

Beam: 39' 1"

Draft: 17' 6" full load

Displacement: 1,784 tons full load

Powerplant: 1 x Maschinenfabrik-Augsburg-Nurnberg diesel direct reversible with reduction gear producing 750 horsepower (1965); 1 Caterpillar diesel engine (1980)

Top speed: 17 knots (under sail) maximum

10 knots (diesel engine only) maximum; 7.5 knots cruising with 5,450 mile range under diesel

power only.

Complement: 19 officers, 46 crew, 175 cadets and instructors

Radar: 1 x AN/SPS-23; AN/SPA-4 (1965)

Sonar: 1 x AN/UQN-1D

Armament: None

Cutter History:

Eagle is a three-masted sailing barque with 21,350 square feet of sail. It is home ported at the CG Academy, New London, Connecticut. It is the only active commissioned sailing vessel in the U.S. maritime services. She is one of five such training barques in world. Remarkably, her surviving sister ships include the *Mircea* of Romania, *Sagres II* of Portugal, *Gorch Fock* of Germany, and *Tovarich* of Russia.

Today's *Eagle*, the seventh in a long line of proud cutters to bear the name, was built in 1936 by the Blohm & Voss Shipyard, Hamburg, Germany, as a training vessel for German Navy cadets. It was commissioned *Horst Wessel* and served as a training ship for the Kriegsmarine throughout World War II. [Click here](#) to read a translated-diary from a German naval cadet who trained aboard the *Horst Wessel* in 1937.

Following World War II, the *Horst Wessel*, in the age-old custom of capture and seizure, was taken as a war prize by the United States. Initially, the Soviet Union selected *Horst Wessel* during the division of Nazi vessels by the victorious Allies. The four available sailing ships had been divided into three lots--two large merchant ships being grouped together. The Soviets drew number 1, Great Britain number 2, and the U.S. number 3. Before the results of the draw were officially announced, the U.S representative, through quiet diplomacy, convinced the Soviets to trade draws.

And so, on May 15, 1946, the German barque was commissioned into U.S. Coast Guard service as the *Eagle* and sailed from Bremerhaven, Germany to New London, Connecticut. On her voyage to the United States she followed Columbus's route across the mid-Atlantic. She rode out a hurricane during her trip and arrived in New London safely. She weathered another hurricane in September 1954 while enroute to Bermuda. She hosted OpSail in New York as part of the World's Fair in 1964. She again hosted OpSail

in 1976 during the United States' Bicentennial celebration. She hosted the centennial celebration for the Statue of Liberty in 1986 as well.

One of the major controversies regarding the cutter was generated when the Coast Guard decided to add the "racing stripe" to her otherwise unadorned hull in mid-1976. She was the last cutter so painted and many in the sailing community decried the new paint job.

Eagle serves as a seagoing classroom for approximately 175 cadets and instructors from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. Sailing in *Eagle*, cadets handle more than 20,000 square feet of sail and 5 miles of rigging. Over 200 lines must be coordinated during a major ship maneuver. The sails can provide the equivalent of several thousand through-shaft horsepower. The ship readily takes to the task for which it was designed. *Eagle's* hull is built of steel, four-tenths of an inch thick. It has two full length steel decks with a platform deck below and a raised forecastle and quarterdeck. The weather decks are three-inch-thick teak over steel.

Commanding Officers:

Horst Wessel:

Kapitan August Thiele, 1936-1938

Korvettenkapitan Weyher, January, 1939-September, 1939

Kapitanleutnant Kretschmar, March, 1940-May, 1940

Fregattenkapitan Eiffe, March, 1941-November, 1942

Kapitanleutnant Schnibbe, November, 1942-May, 1945

USCG Barque *Eagle*:

CAPT Gordon P. McGowan, 1946-1947

CAPT Miles Imlay, 1947-1948

CAPT Carl B. Olsen, 1949

CAPT Carl B. Bowman, 1950-1954

CAPT Karl O. A. Zittel, 1954-1958

CAPT William B. Ellis, 1959

CAPT Chester I. Steele, 1960-1961

CAPT Robert A. Schulz, 1961-1962

CAPT William A. Earle, 1963-1965

CAPT Peter A. Morrill, 1965 (West Coast-East Coast ferry run)

CAPT Archibald B. How, 1965-1967

CAPT Stephen G. Carkeek, 1967

CAPT Harold A. Paulsen, 1968-1971

CAPT Edward D. Cassidy, 1972-1973

CAPT James C. Irwin, 1974-1975

CAPT James R. Kelly, 1975-1976

CAPT Paul A. Welling, 1976-1980

CAPT Martin J. Moynihan, 1980-1983

CAPT Ernst M. Cummings, 1983-1988

CAPT David V.V. Wood, 1988-1992

CAPT Patrick Stillman, 1992-1995

CAPT Donald R. Grosse 1995-1996

CAPT Robert J. Papp, 1996-1999

CAPT Ivan T. Luke, July 1999-2003

CAPT Eric Shaw, 2003-2006

CAPT Joseph C. Sinnett, 2006-

Photographs (click on caption to view photo):

[SNS *Horst Wessel* on the day of her launch, Hamburg, Germany, 1936.](#)

[SNS *Horst Wessel* under sail, May, 1938; photo by Willi Schafer.](#)

[The newly commissioned U.S. Coast Guard training vessel *Eagle* under sail, 1946.](#)

[President Harry S. Truman at the wheel of *Eagle*, 1953.](#)

[*Eagle*, under sail in high winds, cadet cruise, 1954.](#)

[*Eagle* under sail, port side view, no date \(1960's?\), color photo.](#)

[August 15, 1962--President John F. Kennedy's visit to the EAGLE during the EAGLE'S visit to Washington, D.C. President Kennedy is escorted by Secretary of the Treasury Douglas Dillon and Coast](#)

[Guard commandant Admiral Edwin J. Roland, USCG down a pier at the Washington Navy Yard the EAGLE, color photo.](#)

[August 15, 1962--President John F. Kennedy addressing cadets while visiting on board the U.S. Coast Guard Academy training bark EAGLE. during the bark's first port-of-call at Washington, D.C. Dignitaries seen in first row behind the President \(l to r\): Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson, Secretary of the Treasury Douglas Dillon, Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard Admiral Edwin J. Roland, USCG, Under Secretary of the Treasury Henry Fowler, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury James A. Reed. \(Photo by R. L. Knudsen, White House\).](#)

[August 15, 1962--President John F. Kennedy addressing cadets while on board the EAGLE.](#)

[Eagle after her 27 January 1967 collision with M/V *Philippine Jose Abad Santos* in the Chesapeake Bay.](#)

[Eagle under sail, 1971.](#)

[Eagle during the 1972 OPSAIL](#)

[Eagle in New York Harbor near the Statue of Liberty during the Bicentennial Celebration, 1976.](#)

[Eagle under sail, 1995, color photo.](#)

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- [Click here](#) to access the diary/logbook of a German naval cadet who sailed aboard *Horst Wessel* in 1937. [Click here](#) for a translated version.
 - [Click here](#) to access a Cruise Book from *Horst Wessel's* 1937 cruise to East Prussia. [Recommend right clicking to download as it is a large file--87 MB]
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Sources:

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